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For Immediate Release

MILWAUKEE CHOSEN AS PILOT FOR HISPANIC ARTHRITIS CAMPAIGN

(MADISON, September 22, 2005)—The Department of Health and Family Services has been awarded a \$25,000 grant from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to pilot a campaign designed for Spanish speaking men and women titled, “Buenos Días Arthritis.”

“About 27% of Wisconsin adults have physician-diagnosed arthritis,” said Sheri Johnson, State Health Officer. “This program seeks to ensure that bilingual and bicultural citizens receive appropriate and effective health information.”

The money awarded to the Wisconsin Arthritis Program will be used to fund radio spots, newspaper ads and outdoor billboards to focus on exercise as a pain reliever for persons with arthritis. It will promote that 30 minutes a day of moderate activity – such as walking, bike riding, or swimming – at least three times a week can help relieve the pain associated with arthritis. The campaign has begun and will run in Milwaukee September 19th to October 16th.

The CDC Arthritis Program selected Milwaukee as a pilot site for the campaign because of the surge in growth of Hispanic persons in Milwaukee County. The Hispanic population in Milwaukee County has grown to more than 97,000 people, or about 10.3% of the county’s total population.

“Many Latinos who have arthritis are afraid they will not be able to support, take care of, or stay actively involved with their families,” according to Rafael Acevedo, Executive Director of the Latino Health Organization. “Given the importance of family in the Latino culture, they will be relieved to know that exercise can help relieve arthritis pain and stiffness. Staying physically active is a low cost alternative to taking pain medication.”

“Promoting exercise for people with arthritis is a relatively new message. Walking is a safe and sound investment in health that may reduce pain and maintain independence,” said Fran Parker, arthritis program coordinator at the Milwaukee Area Health Education Center.

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The CDC is also testing the campaign in Texas, Florida, California and New York. After analyzing the results of the five-state pilot, the CDC Arthritis Program will refine the campaign and make it available to the states that have arthritis prevention and control programs.

The “Good Morning Arthritis” campaign is a partnership among the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, the Milwaukee Area Health Education Center, the Latino Health Organization, and the Arthritis Foundation – Wisconsin Chapter.

Visit the Wisconsin Arthritis Program at <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/health/arthritis/> for more information.

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